NWT HOSPITAL SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Hay River

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services

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OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2003, the Joint Senior Management Committee (JSMC) began to formalize a process of evaluating consumer's satisfaction with the health and social services system. The project was a collaborative effort between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Authorities as part of their ongoing commitment to evaluation and quality assurance. It also addressed Action Plan Item 5.1.4 – a commitment by the Minister of Health and Social Services to conduct a client satisfaction survey.

JSMC felt it would be best to get feedback from persons using two distinct parts of the system – hospitals and community health centres/social services offices.

In order to address these distinct parts of the system, two different questionnaires and collection methods were used. The Northwest Territories (NWT) Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed to help measure consumer's satisfaction with the four hospitals in the NWT, while the Community Health and Social Services Client Feedback Form was provided at health centres and social services offices.

This report focuses on the results of the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire and is specific to the hospital in Hay River.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND DATA LIMITATIONS

A hospital satisfaction working group was established with a project lead from the Department of Health and Social Services and representatives selected by the Chief Executive Officers from each hospital. In consultation with senior management, hospital staff, the NWT Bureau of Statistics and staff from the Department of Health and Social Services, the working group finalized the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

It was recognized early in the process that budget and human resource constraints limited the choices available for the questionnaire methodology. A self-administered questionnaire was the only option available given these constraints. Recognizing that self-administered questionnaires have lower response rates than telephone and/or in-person interviews by trained interviewers, the working group concentrated efforts of getting buy-in and cooperation from front-line hospital staff for questionnaire distribution.

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire was distributed at the four hospitals in the Northwest Territories during the month of October 2004. Patients were provided a questionnaire and encouraged to complete it by front-line hospital staff. Completed questionnaires were returned to the Department where data entry, analysis and the final reports were completed.

The voluntary and self-administered methodology of the questionnaire resulted in valuable feedback from those who responded to the questionnaire, but does not necessarily provide a representative sample.

The limitation of using a questionnaire with a volunteer bias, rather than a randomly selected representative sample, is data from each hospital must be approached with caution, response rates cannot be calculated and the data cannot be calculated from a territorial perspective.

The findings from these questionnaires can be used to:

- provide feedback to senior management and hospital staff;
- recognize areas that are working well;
- indicate areas of improvement;
- provide a component of the hospital accreditation process;
- serve as baseline data for future client satisfaction measurements.

A total of 398 completed questionnaires were received from people utilizing the hospital in Hay River during the month of October.

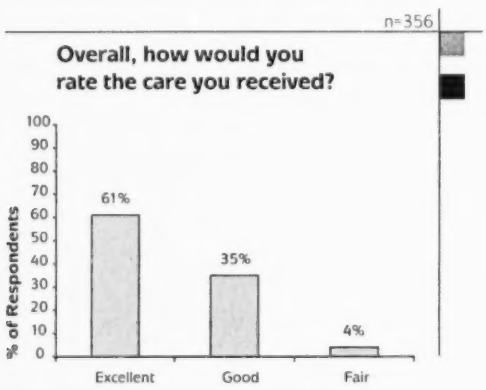
The majority of respondents provided ratings of excellent or good for *every* question asked on the Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Similarly, the majority of comments provided by respondents were also positive. In Hay River, 197 respondents (49%) provided comments on their questionnaires.

MEASURES OF HOSPITAL SATISFACTION

OVERALL SATISFACTION

The question that asked, **"Overall, how would you rate the care you received?"** provides a concise summary of the overall findings of the NWT Hospital Satisfaction questionnaire. The vast majority of respondents provided ratings of excellent or good – a clear indication of their satisfaction with the services provided at the hospital.



- A total of 356 respondents provided ratings for this question (n=356).
- Approximately 96% of respondents rated the overall care they received as good or excellent and 4% said fair.

The following quote summarizes the general findings of the NWT Hospital Questionnaire in Hay River and the high level of satisfaction:

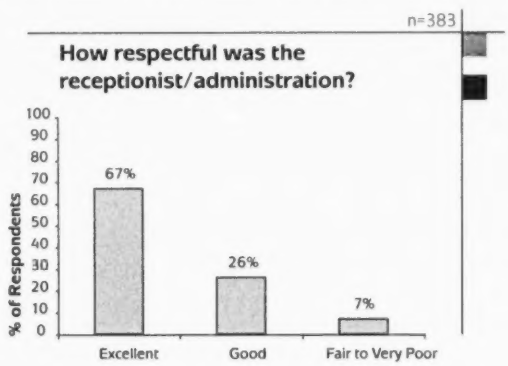
> *Extremely satisfied - everyone who dealt with us was very helpful, friendly and knowledgeable. Everything explained clearly to us - the process was explained so we knew exactly what to do.*

Italics in this report indicate comments taken directly from the questionnaires. To protect anonymity of either the respondent or hospital staff, deletions have been indicated with the use of square brackets []. Additions for clarity of quotes have also been noted with the use of square brackets.

Some percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

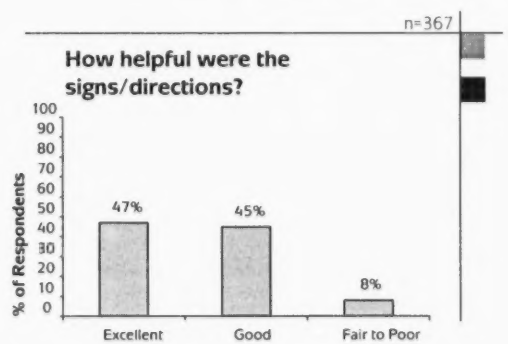
GENERAL QUESTIONS

This section of the questionnaire asked five questions dealing with general services related to the hospital.

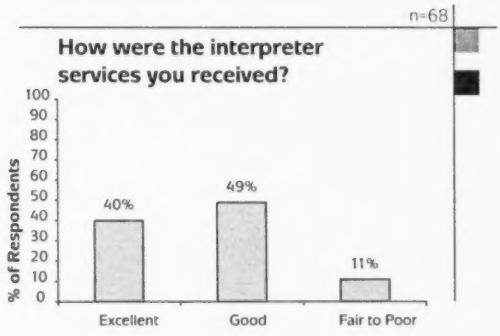


- 93% of respondents rated respectfulness as good or excellent; the majority of comments related to the receptionist/ administration were positive. Comments included friendly staff and acknowledgement.
- Fair to very poor ratings were given by 7% of respondents. The few comments reflecting these ratings included the need for someone at the front and a friendlier welcome.

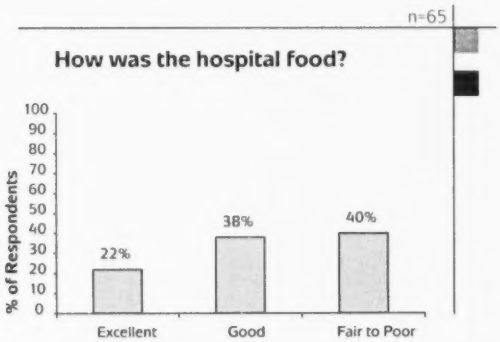
- Only 3% of respondents rated cleanliness as fair to very poor while 97% of respondents rated cleanliness as good or excellent.



- 92% of respondents said the signs/directions were good or excellent, with 8% stating fair or poor.
- One comment was reflective of those saying improvement was required: *Unless you know where the special clinic is from previous visit - difficult to know - need better signage.*



- 89% of respondents said the interpreter services were good or excellent while11% said the services were fair or poor.

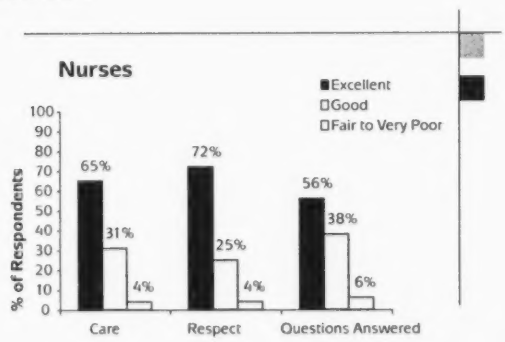


- 40% of respondents rated the hospital food as fair or poor – the lowest level of satisfaction on the questionnaire.
- However, when excellent or good responses are combined, over half of the respondents were satisfied with the hospital food (60%).

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

The Health Care Provider section of the questionnaire was divided into three types of health care providers: nurses, doctors and specialized health care providers. Similar questions were asked of each type of health care provider.

Nurses



- The high level of respondent satisfaction with nurses was evident in the three questions directly related to nursing. Questions relating to care, respect and how the nurses answered questions all received good or excellent ratings of 94% or higher.

What do you think about the care you received from the nurses?

A total of 152 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Many positive comments reflected the 96% of respondents who rated the nursing care as good or excellent. These included comments about the helpfulness, friendliness and professionalism of nurses.

A few comments were reflective of the 4% of the respondents who said the nursing care was fair or poor and suggested that the attitude of some nurses needed improvement.

How respectful were the nurses?

A total of 154 respondents provided ratings for this question.

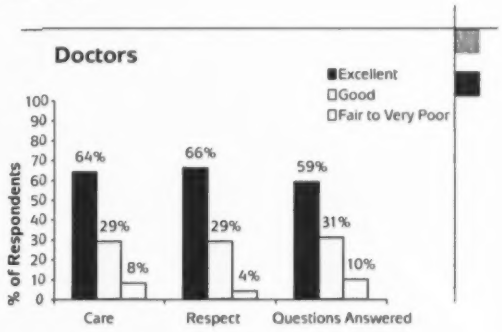
Similar to the care provided by nurses, the ratings for respect were 96% of respondents saying good or excellent and 4% said fair to very poor.

How well did the nurses answer your questions?

A total of 136 respondents provided ratings for this question.

In response to how well the nurses answered questions, 94% of respondents said good or excellent and 6% said fair or poor.

Doctors



- Respondents also indicated good or excellent ratings of 90% or higher for the three questions directly related to doctors.

What do you think about the care you received from the doctors?

A total of 136 respondents provided ratings for this question.

The majority of comments related to the care provided by doctors reflected the 92% of respondents who said good or excellent. For example: *The doctor was very thorough and great in [the] examination of my son*. Fair to very poor ratings were selected by 8% of respondents. Comments reflecting these respondents included the need for continuity of doctors and concern over wait time.

How respectful were the doctors?

A total of 136 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Approximately 95.5% of respondents said good or excellent and 4.5% said fair.

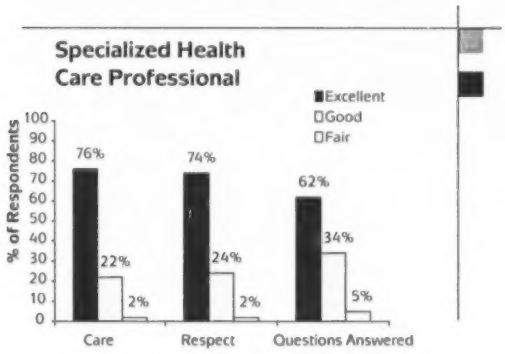
How well did the doctors answer your questions?

A total of 133 respondents provided ratings for this question.

The majority of comments relating to doctors' communication reflected the 90% of respondents who indicated good or excellent. For example:
I had some questions for the doctor and the answers were very clear and understandable.

Fair or poor ratings were selected by 10% of the respondents with corresponding comments including the respondents feeling rushed and concern over continuity of care.

Specialized Care (For example: blood work, x-ray, physiotherapy, stress test etc.)



- Questions on the care, respect and how well specialized care providers answered questions received very high ratings of satisfaction.
- No "Poor" or "Very Poor" ratings were selected in this section of the questionnaire with "Fair" being the lowest rating given by respondents in all three questions.

What do you think about the care you received from the specialized care professional (for example, the lab technologist who drew your blood, the physiotherapist)?

A total of 344 respondents provided ratings for this question.

The question on care provided by the specialized care professionals received the highest excellent rating of the questionnaire – 76%.

Many comments reflected the 98% of respondents who rated the care from specialized care professionals as good or excellent. Some were general comments: *Very caring, polite, friendly and informative service*. Other comments were specific to the service area.

How respectful were the specialized health care professionals?

A total of 347 respondents provided ratings for this question.

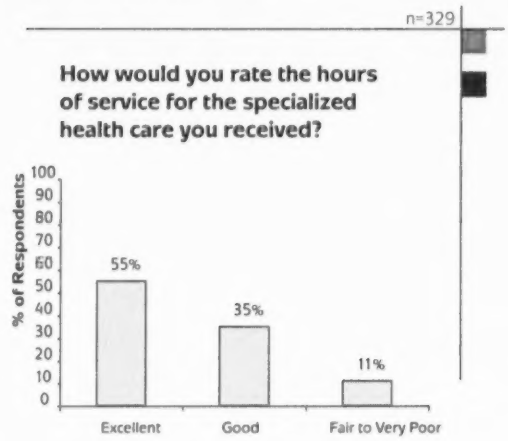
98% of respondents rated the respectfulness of the specialized health care professionals as excellent or good.

How well did the specialized health care professionals answer your questions?

A total of 304 respondents provided ratings for this question.

96% of respondents rated the answering of their questions by specialized health care professionals as good or excellent.

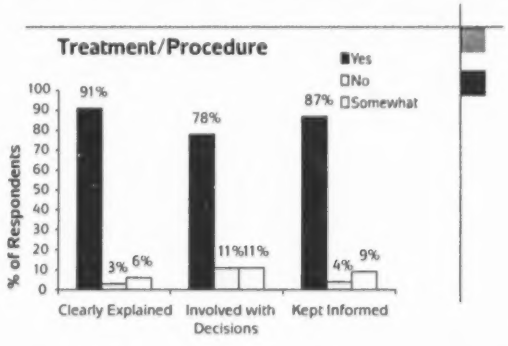
Respondents were also asked, **"How would you rate the hours of service for the specialized health care you received?"**



- While 89% of respondents said the hours of service were good or excellent, 11% said fair to very poor.
- Comments reflecting these lower ratings included things such as expanding the hours of operation and improving wait times.

TREATMENT/PROCEDURE

The questionnaire asked respondents three questions related to their treatment/procedure.



- The vast majority of respondents (78% or higher) indicated that their treatments/procedures were clearly explained, that they were involved in the decisions affecting their care and that they were kept informed about the care planned for them.

Was your treatment/procedure clearly explained to you?

A total of 311 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Only 3% of respondents said their treatment/procedure was not clearly explained, with 97% saying yes or somewhat.

Were you involved in decisions affecting your care?

A total of 232 respondents provided ratings for this question.

A slightly higher number of respondents felt they were not involved in decisions affecting their care - 11%.

Were you kept informed about the care planned for you?

A total of 244 respondents provided ratings for this question.

Over 95% of respondents responded yes or somewhat on being kept informed about the care planned for them.

FEEDBACK

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire asked two open-ended questions to gather more detailed information from respondents:

- **Tell us about the things we are doing well; and**
- **Tell us about the areas in which we could improve.**

Comment sections were also provided following the General, Health Care Providers and Treatment/Procedure sections and at the end of the questionnaire. In Hay River, 197 respondents (49%) provided comments on their questionnaires. Some respondents provided multiple comments in more than one section of the questionnaire; therefore the count of comments exceeds 197.

Although the NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire focused exclusively on hospital services, some respondents directed comments towards the medical clinic services and staff in Hay River. These comments have also been summarized due to the evident inter-dependency some respondents feel between the clinic and hospital.

The following is a summary of the comments provided by respondents using the hospital in Hay River.

Tell us about the things we are doing well:

The highest number of comments were related to staff. Approximately 118 comments, or 30% of the 391 positive comments, directly or indirectly praised the staff at the hospital.

Indirect praise or general comments towards staff included things such as:

Friendly and competent staff.

Respectful to family and cultural traditions.

"Friendly", "professional", "knowledgeable", "caring" and "helpful" were common phrases used to describe staff.

Praise was also directed towards staff in specific service areas as well as towards specific staff members. Respondents included the names of individual nurses, doctors and specialized health care professionals in noting exceptional service.

Respondents also provided general comments on the service they received. Positive praise were reflected in the 69 comments such as:

Very good service.

Keep up the good work! Thanks.

Good communication was another area in which respondents felt the hospital was doing well (32 comments). These included respondents appreciating the care displayed by staff during their visit:

Acknowledging me as soon as I walk in. Respect. Appreciating that I have a real problem. Taking the time to listen. Working with me.

Communication was also praised in relation to the medical care the respondent received:

Following-up with patients - how they are doing with prescribed medications, making necessary adjustments with medications as required.

Respondents also noted wait times and efficiency in 24 comments. These included appreciation for the availability of appointments, prompt service and appointments starting on time. One respondent wrote:

Our patient waiting times in the hospital are very short - anyone who complains has obviously not been to a city hospital.

The facility was singled out for praise in 15 different comments.
This included notes about its cleanliness, maintenance and general comments such as:

This hospital in Hay River is a nice place.

Other positive comments (11 in total) were directed towards the medical clinic, administration or process and various other areas. Examples of these miscellaneous comments included:

Things we are doing well:

My experience both at the clinic and hospital was excellent.

Case management with specialists. Referral to appropriate care "out of Territory".

Surveys.

Tell us about the areas in which we could improve:

Cited most often under the need for improvement were the need for more doctors and continuity of care through permanent doctors. This represented 22% of all suggestions for improvement (27 of the 124 comments). Another 7 comments identified the need for more staff generally.

More resident doctors needed. Slim chance of seeing the same doctor twice or following up on a treatment plan. Different doctors - different diagnosis at times - extremely frustrating.

We need more staff and more services.

Staff related comments appeared in 12 different comments.
The comments were primarily directed towards suggestions related to attitude, for example:

A caring smile goes a long way rather than a cold, "How can I help you?"

The need for improved signage, the lack of a staff member being by the entrance at certain times and the waiting rooms not being adequate for disabled people appeared in 10 comments.

Another 10 comments suggested improvements were required in administration or processes. For example:

Get organized. Get communication between clinic - doctor - hospital - nurses.

A total of 8 comments felt communication could be improved. One respondent wrote:

Communication between Yellowknife and Hay River - I have heard of MORE than one instance where an appointment in Yellowknife was cancelled and only a voice mail message left which did not get through - consequently the patient traveled unnecessarily to Yellowknife.

Comments were also provided suggesting babies be delivered in Hay River (5 comments), improved hours of service (4) and miscellaneous comments (6) such as:

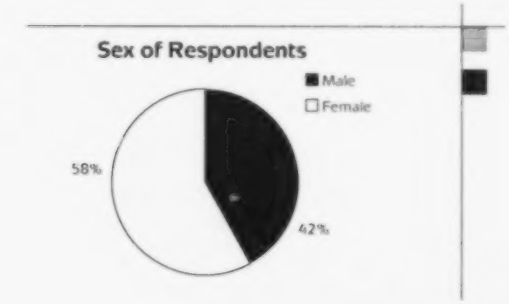
Employ more aboriginal employees.

It is my opinion that gravel/sand/salt be put on the driveway/steps at all times as it is VERY dangerous MOST of the time.

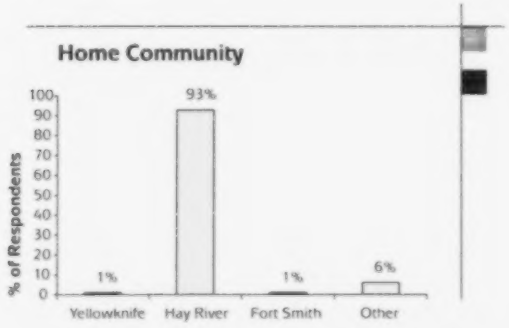
There were 12 comments related to improvements respondents felt were required at the clinic. These comments related to wait times, staff attitude and concerns about confidentiality.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic questions were asked to provide more detailed analysis and comparisons of questionnaire responses where applicable. The demographic also provided information on the 398 respondents who completed questionnaires in Hay River.



- Respondents were asked for their sex, home community, ethnicity and age.
- A total of 367 respondents indicated whether they were male or female.



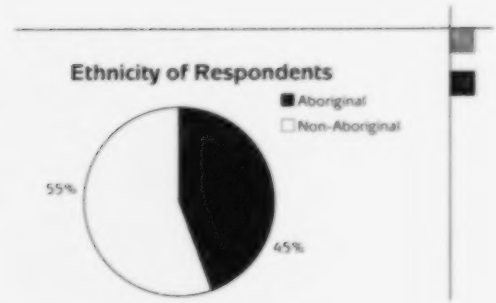
- The majority of respondents were from Hay River.
- A total of 361 respondents provided their home community.

The high non-response rate for the question on ethnicity indicates the sensitivity of this issue - 131 respondents (33%) did not indicate if they were Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal.

Some respondents provided comments directly on the questionnaire indicating their reasoning behind leaving the question blank:

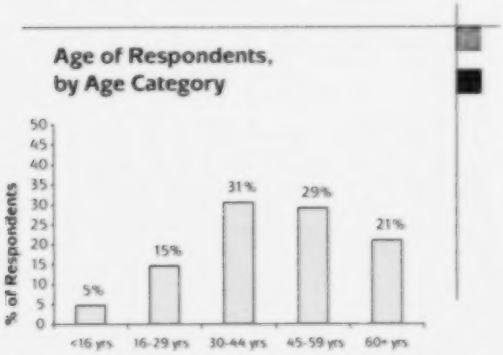
Canadian!

Demographics involving racial origins shouldn't come up -
it should not matter whether one is pink, yellow, aboriginal or not.



- A total of 267 respondents indicated their ethnicity.

The original intent of the questionnaire was to be distributed to people 16 years and older. Questionnaires were received where the age completed was under 16. In some cases, parents completed the questionnaire on behalf of a child receiving the hospital services and put in the child's age (for example 1 year old).



- All completed questionnaires were included in the analysis.
- Excluding the under 16 age category, the average age of respondents was 47 years.
- The age ranged to 85 years old.
- A total of 357 respondents indicated their age.

CONCLUSION

The NWT Hospital Satisfaction Questionnaire asked respondents general questions relating to reception/administration, hospital cleanliness, signage, hospital food and interpreter services. Respondents also provided ratings relating to the care, respect and communication experienced in their treatment/procedure and dealings with health care professionals.

In all of these sections of the questionnaire – General, Health Care Providers and Treatment/Procedure – the majority of the 398 total respondents were satisfied with the care they received from the hospital in Hay River. This satisfaction was reflected in the fact that 96% of respondents said that overall, the care they received was excellent or good.

The majority of comments provided by respondents also reflected the quality of service provided. Hospital staff in particular received numerous comments praising their professionalism and caring attitudes. While some respondents offered suggestions for change and the need for improvement, the majority of comments reflected the high levels of satisfaction found in every question.